Lightning Strikes

Vol. 12 No. 1 P-38 National Association April 1999

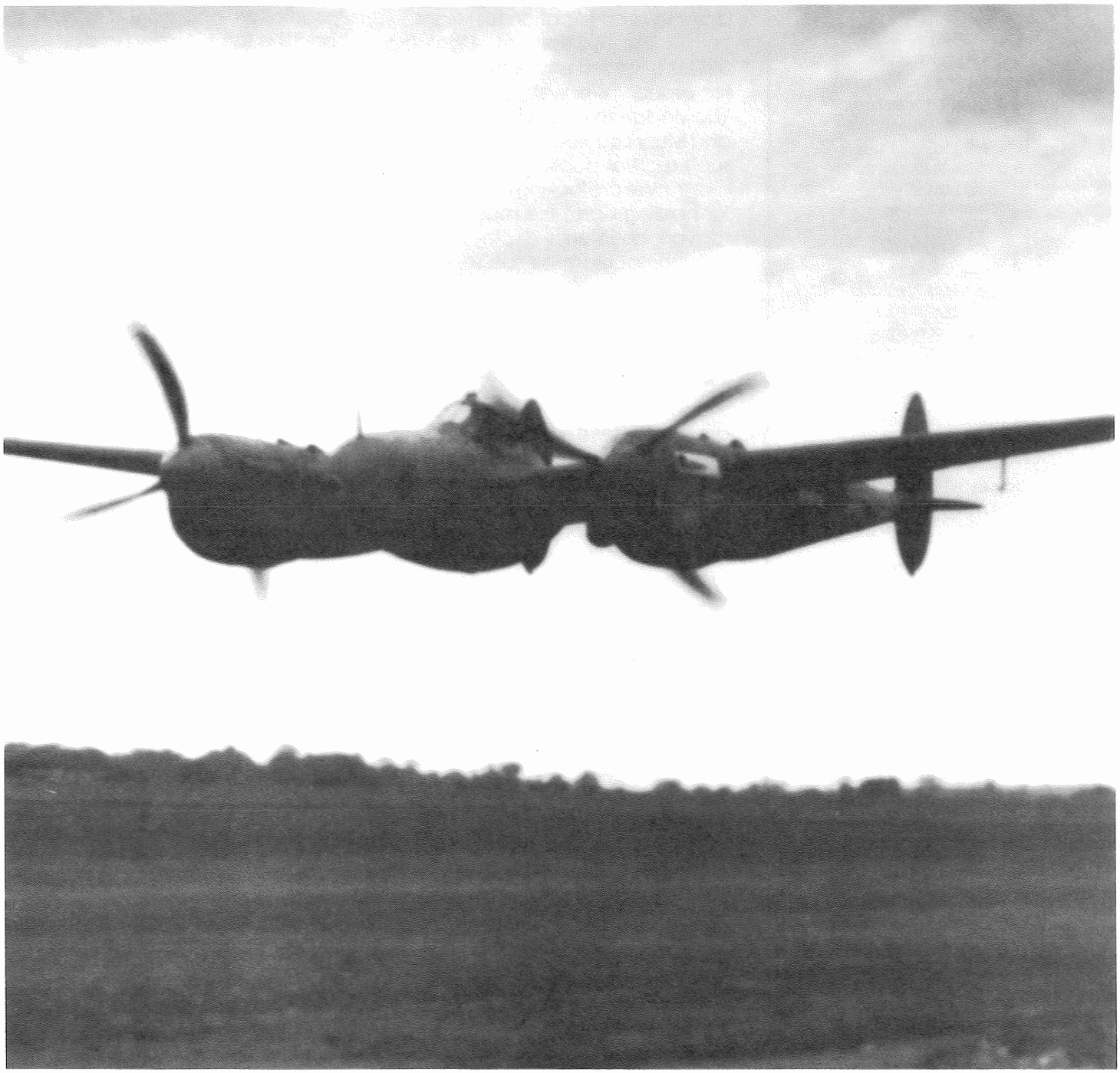


Photo Recon P-38 Lightning flying low and fast. Courtesy of Hector Ganzalez from the book "Eyes of the Eighth."

Lightning Strikes

Editorial Offices
5059 N Alfalfa St. Linden CA 95236
Phone/Fax: 209-887-2968

Editor
Craig Anderson

Historians-Staff Writers
Mary Lou Neale
Steve Blake
Lloyd Levine
John Stoneway
Pete Madison
Stan Jones

Editorial Assistant
Dick Willsie
Lee Northrup

Design and Production
Craig Anderson

Association Officers

President/Director
Jack W. Mullan
949-852-9111

1st Vice Presidents
Joe Onesty
"Chile" Childress
Jack Head
Jake Hendrix
Jack Purdy

Second Vice Presidents
Seymour V. Prell
Pat Connolly
Chuck Mauss

Secretary
Norma F. Smith

Membership Chairman
Al Campbell

Treasurer
James J. Hagenback

Ombudsman
Lloyd L. Levine

Association Directors
Edwin C. Baquet
Al Campbell
Bruce Carnachan
"Chili" Childress
Milliard F. Coffman
Hector R. Gonzalez
Jim Hagenback
William A. Ham
Jack Head
Jake Hendrix
Frank D. Hurlbut
Jack Ilfrey
Donald S. Johnston
Joseph A. Kuhn
Lloyd Levine
Harold N. "Pete" Madison
Jack Mullan
Claude Murray
Mary Lou Neale
Frederick D. Nichol
Joheph Onesty
Seymour Prell
Jack Purdy
Lynn Shubert
Norma Smith
Irvine M. Styer
Jack Walker

President's Report

1999 has rolled around and I have survived my heart attacks and four-way by-pass surgery. Progress is still being made on the hangar exhibits and recently our resident P-38 owned by **David Tallichet** has undergone extensive overhaul and re-licensing. At our January Directors/Executive Committee Meeting we were able to hear the engines purring but missed by one day the recertification test flight.

This edition of ***Lightning Strikes*** is the first under the new editor group. We wish again to acknowledge the work that **Joe Kuhn** and **Mary Lou Neale** did in founding such a great publication.

We are looking for volunteers for holding open the museum and to work on interior displays. If you can't help, them please send your donations

Our January Directors/Executive Committee Meeting authorized the negotiation with David Tallichet's company to acquire a full-size replica of the P-38. His replicas are hard to tell from the real aircraft. The P-40 at the entrance to the March Field Museum is one of his replicas.

Our monthly meetings have grown to an average attendance of over 50 and are usually on the third Thursday of the month in the P-38 hangar at March Field. You are all welcome. Call our secretary, **Norma Smith**, for information fnad to let us know if you are coming so that we will have enough food.

We are coming up on election of new officers for the 1999-2000 term. My recovery from open-heart surgery has left me with "limited" energy. It has been a pleasure serving as President of the **P-38 National Association** and now it is time to hand the torch on and to start looking to the younger generation to do some of the administrative work. Anyone interested in becoming an Officer, Director, or volunteer should contact **"Pete" Madison**, Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

We now have a permanent place to preserve the memory and history of the P-38. Our museum building can hold many more exhibits. A list of those P-38 units not represented will be published in the next edition of Lightning Strikes. Let's keep it going with your continued support and plan on the Year 2000 Grand Reunion in Palm Springs over Memorial Day Weekend featuring all P-38 units.

Thank each and every one of you for your contributions to our organization.

--Jack W. Mullan
Association President

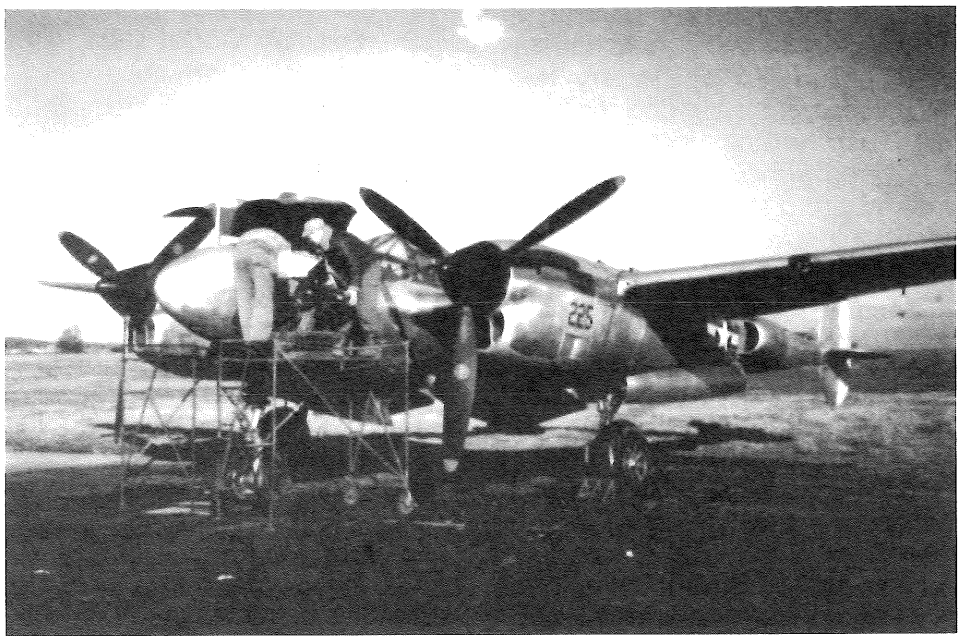
P-38 J10 LO 42-67427 Lucky Lady MCH shown on the Classic American Aircraft U.S. postage stamp is "Lucky Lady" flown by 1st/LT Arthur W. Heiden. L to R: Heiden, T/SGT Max Pyles, Crew Chief, S/SGT John Cavalier, Radio, SGT Clyde Birdwell, Assistant Crew Chief and SGT Charles Fink, Armorer. This information was confirmed by artist William S. Phillips. Photo courtesy Jack Ilfrey. "We of the 79thFS were quite proud of the fact that it was chosen," Ilfrey said.

Twin-Tail Tales

Target Borneo

By John Brown, 26th Photo Recon Squadron

In your own words . . .



On October 7, 1944, I had just finished getting the morning mission off when I got a phone call from ng Headquarters. I picked up a cup of coffee and started up the hill wondering what kind of trouble I was in now.

I entered the office and said, "Sergeant, what kind of trouble am I in now?" Major Armstrong heard my voice, called me to come right in, and said, "Sit down, John."

I poured myself another cup of coffee from the pot and put it on the desk. He said, "John, we have a very important mission coming up and I know you can do it. Your combat time is about up, and we will not blame you if you say no. We need to send a pilot to find Borneo and to photograph any Japanese ships there."

"Major, I have never turned down a mission yet, so give me a go," I replied.

He smiled and said, "We don't have much of a map, but I know you can figure it out."

Back in Operations I checked the board to see who I could use on this mission. John Beasley's name was up, and he could use a good ride like this. I called him up to the Operations Office and told him what was up.

"I am ready, Captain," he said.

"O.K.," I said, "Get your hammock, mosquito net and rosary beads."

I headed over to the kitchen and ordered the kitchen to make up two bags of food and water.

We took off about 10:00 AM and landed at Morati about 12:00 Noon and taxied up to a very small operations building and parked. We walked over and the attendant wanted to know why we landed there. I told him what we planned to do and asked for a map. He laughed and pointed his finger just west and said, "It's out that way someplace. You may be able to get some help from one of those big ships out there in the ocean."

I said, "How in the hell can I get out to those ships?"

He replied, "I'll call out and tell them to send a boat in to pick up a captain that wants to come aboard and talk to your navigation officer."

A small boat soon came over and tied up, and the occupants climbed up on the pier. They came over to where we were standing and asked if we know where the captain was that called for a boat. I knew that they were looking for a Navy captain. I said, "We're the ones who called to go aboard your ship."

We boarded the boat, and cruised over to the large ship, boarded and were escorted to the captain's office. We saluted and told him what we needed. He smiled and said that the only map they had was one that Magellan had made when he was there. I said that I would take anything if they could make us a copy. He said, "O.K. Boys, we will have some lunch, and then we'll make you a copy."

Afterwards, I thanked him and told him that it was the best lunch we had had since arriving from the states. That had been almost a year now. He said that they were pulling out that night, and that he wished us the best of luck. I thanked him and saluted. We boarded that small boat and went back to the air base.

We got the fuel truck to come down and refill our tanks. We had some supper, thanked the cook and I talked to some fighter pilots, asking if anyone had been to Borneo. They said no and that it was too far for their fighter planes. Returning to our parked airplanes, we got into our sleeping bags and counted the stars until we fell asleep. We were up before daylight.

We put our sleeping gear away and went up to the mess hall for some breakfast with the fighter pilots, who kept telling us not to go too far or we might never get back. I thanked them for the information and told them we'd be back. We returned to our planes, lined up, and took off.

We settled back at 8,000 feet at 180 miles per hour and flew for three and a half hours. My idea was to take the north side of the island, make a circle, and head back. I noticed a lot of Japanese ships all along, and they were headed for the Philippines.

(Continued on page 4.)

(Target Borneo continued from page 1.)

I got John's attention with hand signals and motioned that we would go to 17,000 feet and make a big turn to the left. I would turn my cameras on first and every two minutes turn them off and then on. We would not talk and would use only hand signals. I would signal John when to start his cameras. If either of us saw "Bogies", we would talk and head for home.

After a while, John signalled that he was out of film, so we headed for Morati. We landed after completing a ten and a half hour mission. John Beasley was completely worn out.

I know that the photos should be delivered to headquarters immediately. I gassed up and told John to get his film mounted and put in my plane. He would stay at Morati that night and come home the next day.

After an hour it became dark and I turned on my instrument panel. The lights on the dash board were dead. I took some matches out of my survival kit and struck one to hold over the instrument panel. I was blinded by the match light and had to close my eyes. I got another match, closed my eyes, and struck it and held it over the instrument panel until it burned my fingers. I opened my eyes and could see the panel lights. I continued on.

I finally saw the Biak lights and noticed that nothing was coming in to land the regular way, so I decided to come straight in the opposite way. I dropped my wheels and was about to set down when a transport turned on its lights headed right for me. I poured the power to the engines and pulled it straight up.

I closed my eyes and struck another match and held it until it burned my fingers. I waited a second or two to open my eyes. The panel was all lit up and I came around and followed the transport. I still had no landing lights. A line crew came along in a jeep and led me back to our parking area. I got down on my knees to thank that man who took care of me.

I finished out my flying time with these last three missions:
12 October, 1944 Mokmer-Morati-staging 3:15 hours
13 October, 1944 Morati-Mindoro-Morati-Mokmer 10:15 hours
15 October, 1944 Mokmer-Ambon-Mokmer 7:50 hours (300 hours)

Veroda Joins Catapillar Club

by Victor Veroda, 459th FS

Aviation Cadet Class 43K, Dec. 1943 and I have my Silver Wings. "I'm a single engine flighter pilot!" The guys from North Africa were teaching us about the P-39 at Santa Rosa, CA, then we went up to Chico to fly the P-63 before receiving orders to Ontario to fly the P-38.

June 2, 1944: I'm on a high altitude formation mission with **Lt. Dolon** 30,000 feet. "Gosh, it's mushy and he's seeing if I can stay with him. He won't lose me," I thought. Just then I lost power on the left engine and the cockpit filled with smoke. I lowered the window and feathered the prop.

"I've got a fire! Open the vents, dive it, slip it, blow it (the fire) out." When the skin over the engine began shedding, I thought, "I'm getting out before she blows," and off went the canopy.

I'd decided days earlier if I ever had to bail out, I was rolling that baby over and falling out.

"But we're over L.A. This baby will hit a hotel and kill a thousand people."

It wasn't that far from the Pacific so: "I'll trim it up, head her out to sea and get out. That's what I'll do."

Except with one dead engine the plane just rolled on around. Next time I stopped her and almost fell out, lying there face up on the wing beside the nacelle. My pants leg was caught on something and we were flying out to sea. I kicked myself loose.

"There's no sensation of falling but my pants are flapping, hair is flowing and I'm high. Check those buckles, chest, leg, leg. Hang on to that D-Ring (I still have it.) We're still high. Do we fall head down or feet down when we pop the chute? I don't recall. I knew we should have practiced. Things are getting bigger. We must be down into the oxygen by now. Check the buckles. Hang on to the D-Ring. There she streams. WOW!"

I must have blacked out momentarily. But there it was—beautiful silk. An F-6 was circling me — "Welcome, comrade!" — until I floated through his prop wash which threatened to spill the air from my chute. "You S.O.B.!"

When I landed on the outskirts of San Pedro, two boys ages 9 and 11 ran up to me. Almost immediately a Marine Corps ambulance was there. They were having maneuvers on the beach.

"Where did the plane hit? Take me over there."

They complied and from a distance I could see a smoldering hole. I was relieved; no one was hit. A Vultee Vibrator from Ontario came to Fort MacArthur to pick me up. I flew back and spent the night in the hospital.

When I saw my Dad a year and a half later, he told me he had seen headlines in a San Antonio paper, "Man Dies - P-38 Crashes". Intuitively, he saw his name (the same as mine) in the body of the article.

"Why didn't they call me? Why didn't someone let me know? Maybe they tried—I've been on the road several days." When he composed himself, he read that a fireman answering a call to the crash site had succumbed to a heart attack. The pilot, **Victor Veroda**, had parachuted to safety.

Editor's Note: In the letter accompanying his story, Victor told *anotherr* interesting story.

December 7, 1998. The phone rang. "Are you Victor J. Veroda?"

Yes.

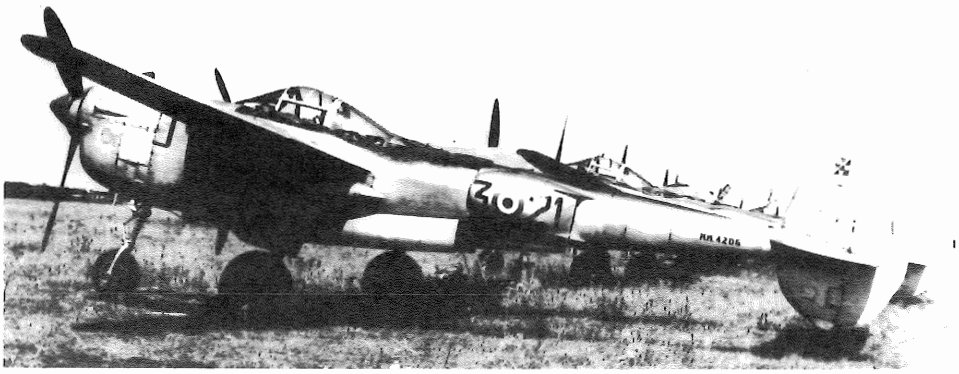
"Did you bail out of a P-38 over San Pedro, CA on June 2,

(Continued on page 6.)

Historian's Corner

LIGHTNINGS, ITALIAN STYLE

By STEVE BLAKE,
Association Historian



P-38 of 3rdFW at Bari Palese Airfield. Italian Serial MM 4206. This aircraft crashed on January 15, 1952. (Photo coutesy of Carlo Lucchini.)

It wasn't long after VJ Day that the USAAF began eliminating the Lightning from its aircraft inventory. Thousands of P-38s and F-5s were cut up for scrap, both in the U.S. and in the former combat theaters where the Lightning had served with such distinction.

Only a few hundred were saved from the smelter; some of these were sold as surplus to private citizens (Association member Bill Lear bought one in 1946 for $1,250!) and others to friendly nations for their air forces.

The largest group of surplus Lightnings went to the Italian Air Force (Aeronautica Militaire'). This was somewhat ironic, since USAAF Lightning units in the Mediterranean Theater had often fought against the Regia Aeronautica, as the Italian Air Force was then known, just a couple of years earlier.

After Italy surrendered to the Allies in September, 1943, there were two Italian air forces. In the south, the Italian Co-Belligerent Air Force was partly re-equipped with American and British aircraft and fought with the Allies until VE Day. In German-held northern Italy, the Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana fought alongside the Luftwaffe, seeing considerable action against 15thAF Lightnings.

In April, 1946 an agreement was concluded whereby 100 USAAF Lightnings stored at the Naples-Capodichino Airfield were transferred to the Aeronautica Militaire' Italiana. These were overhauled at Capodichino by the Italian company Industrie Meccaniche Meridionali (I.M.M.) of Naples.

The first Italian Lightnings were assigned to the 4 Stormo Caccia Terreste (4th Landbased Fighter Wing) which moved from Lecce to Capodichino to re-equip with them in the summer of 1946. They soon became operational with the Wing's 9th and 10th Fighter Groups (Gruppi Caccia Terreste) which had been flying old P-39 Airacobras that were supplied to them by the USAAF for service with the Co-Belligerent Air Force.

Besides P-38 J and L fighters, the 4th Wing also received some late model F-5 reconnaissance aircraft and a "droop snoot" that was used for training. By the end of the year the wing had about 30 Lightnings.

The Italian pilots had problems transitioning to the Lightning and throughout its service with the Aeronautica Militaire' there were numerous accidents, some of them fatal.

For one thing, they were used to flying single-engined fighters such as the nimble, light-weight Macchis and Fiats. The huge, twin-engined P-38 was a different beast, indeed!

Another problem was that of maintenance and serviceability, a scarcity of spare parts - such as gaskets and tires - greatly contributing thereto.

The Lightnings served with the 4th Fighter Wing until the spring of 1948 when it began converting to P-51s. The 3 Stormo Caccia was re-established later that year at the Bari-Palese Airfield and the remaining Lightnings were transferred to its 28 and 132 Gruppi. The 3rd was nicknamed the "Baltimore" Wing as it had flown twin-engined Martin Baltimore bombers in WW II as part of the Co-Belligerent AF.

In the spring of 1950 the 3rd Wing had 30 Lightnings, but by the fall of the following year this number had been reduced by attrition to 20. 132 Gurppo re-equipped with Mustangs, and all the remaining P-38s were assigned to 28 Gruppo, making it the last operational Lightning unit in the Italian Air Force.

Besides being utilized as interceptors, the Italian P-38s were also used in tactical roles in cooperation with the Army and Navy. And, of course, its F-5s were used for reconnaissance. In the early Fifties, several 3 Stormo F-5s were attached to NATO's 56th Tactical Air Force at Vicenza Airfield. During this period one of them crashed during a mission over (Communist) Yugoslavia.

A few Lightnings were used for training purposes by the Air Force

(Continued on page 14.)

Lightning Strikes Will Live On!

Continue to send your new material and photos to the Lightning Strikes Editorial Staff c/o the new editor Craig Anderson. **Lightning Strikes** will be published without interruption

Grand Reunion Year 2000 Report

By Dick Willsie

P-38 LOCKHEED LIGHTNING - GRAND REUNION YEAR 2000
MAY 24 -29, 2000 - WYNDHAM HOTEL, PALM SPRINGS, CA

We are inviting everyone who has had a close association with the famous P-38 fighter/recce/bomber multi-role aircraft. This will be a super tribute event for those who designed it, built it, supported it, flew it, those whose lives were saved by it, and our younger generation known as friends of the P-38/F5.

PROGRAM - KEYNOTES

Ample time will be programmed to allow the separate groups and squadron associations to have individual parties, meetings and dining together. Arrangements will be easily made with the armed forces reunion personnel. Three hotels are booked and Palm Springs is filled with sights to see.

By bus we will visit the March Air Museum located at the March Air Reserve Base near Riverside. This museum is planned to be the largest air museum in the west. It is very close to reaching that status. Part of this museum is a P-38/F5 complex that consists of a hangar filled with a P-38, a P-51 and memoribilia.

The display tells the story of all the P-38/F5 units and WAAFs of WW-II and after WW-II.

In the P-38 complex is a similar building that houses the South Pacific **475th Fighter Group's** museum.

Between the two buildings is a covered pavilion designed for meetings, BBQ, and parties. The complex has another building for office and storage.

In front of all this is a huge concrete ramp which will be doubled in size by the March Museum. New hangars are being built on the south side of our complex.

The P-38/F5 complex was built by the **P-38 National Association** with your donations. A memorial statue in front of the hangar has the names of donors engraved in black granite.

We will visit by bus the now famous Palm Springs Air Museum. This museum is spectacular because it has a large number of WW-II flying combat aircraft. We will have an aerial display of these aircraft that will really bring back memories.

We are working with P-38 owners with the idea of having six - yes, SIX - P-38/F5 aircraft flying at both of our museum visits. This will be a moment of history that you should not miss.

Another event that will bring back memories will be a history panel consisting of an exceptional unit mission flown that will be selected and presented by each squadron or group.

The final event will be a ballroom banquet with a 1940s orchestra, accommodating all of our participants. It will be a grand event with prizes, etc. And there will also be a surprise guest speaker.

The city of Palm Springs is proud and every enthusiastic that this once-in-a-lifetime event is to be held in their famous city.

---

*(**Veroda** continued from page 4.)*

1944?"

Yes.

"If you'll send me an account of your experience, I'll send you a scrap of metal from that crash."

I did and he did, with the explanation that his father at age ten had traded for that scrap with some other kids and had given it to him (his son) when he was ten years old. Printed inside the scrap was the date and location of the crash. The son, always intrigued, contacted the San Pedro Library which sent him copies of the news account. Getting my name from the news account, he got my telephone number through the Internet.

"I want to surprize Dad (a retired VP of Chase Manhattan Bank) with this for Christmas."

I sent him pictures of myself beside my airplane in Chittagong, India along with the 181 page history of ther SquadronTwin Dragons CBI 1943-1945es M. Fielder The son lives in Baltimore, Dad in Vermont or Delaware.

Victor Veroda
1811 Guiliford Lane
Oklahoma City, OK 73120
veroda@ionet.net

Ilfrey, Barber Inducted into CAF Hall of Fame

By Mary Lou Neale

The wartime actions of two of our distinguished **P-38 Association** members, **Jack Ilfrey** and **Rex Barber**, were considered sufficiently laudable for induction into the Confederate Air Force's American Combat Airman Hall of Fame on October 1, 1998 in Midland, Texas during a ceremonial banquet.

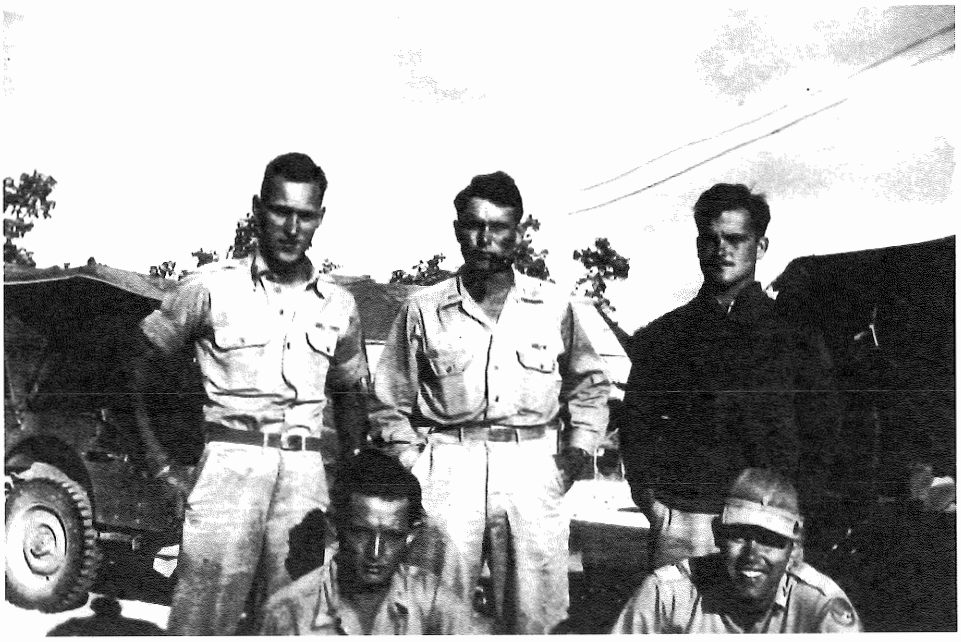
As readers of ***Lightning Strikes*** know, Jack Ilfrey was in the Bolero Mission, the first mass flight of P-38's over the North Atlantic, and one of the first aces of the **12th Air Force**. In a dogfight near Berlin, he collided with one of the two Me 109's he shot down and yet made it home minus five feet of his wing.

Serving in both the Mediterranean and European Theatre, he once landed behind enemy lines to rescue his wing man. Later, he was shot down but after four harrowing days of posing as a French deaf mute, he made his way through

(Continued on page 11.)

P-38 Fallout

By Robert J. Sims, 35th FS, 8th FG



Officers of the 35thFS, Ie Shima, September 30, 1945. Front row, Pete Laborde and Robert Sims. Standing, Carter, Lang and Capen. (Sims)

Pete Laborde was my tent mate on Ie Shima. After WW II ended and our squadron **(35thFS, 8thFG)** was moving to Japan, Pete was scheduled to fly a P-38 to Japan. At the end of the war most of our ground officers who had been overseas two or three years were shipped home. Since I had worked for the telephone company for a couple of years before going into the service, I was made Squadron Communication Officer. Instead of flying a P-38 to Japan, I was scheduled to go on an LST to make sure all of our equipment arrived intact.

It was a beautiful October day and most of the 8th Fighter Group personnel were getting a little sun or playing bridge on the deck of the LST, which was anchored in Okinawa Bay waiting for a convoy to form. Suddenly, out of the blue, a P-61 buzzed our ship. The plane was right on the deck and pulled up vertically about 100 feet away. The pilot was pulling a lot of G's and at about 250 feet altitude something fell out of the airplane. At first we thought it was a dummy, but a chute opened, took one swing, and landed in the water.

The Navy pulled the person out of the water and took him to the hospital ship for overnight observation. At the time, we had no idea it was one of our pilots, Lt. Pete Laborde. Pete immediately sent a teletype that he was OK, but it was three days before the message reached the squadron four miles across the bay. The next day Pete bummed a ride across the bay to Ie Shima on a Navy boat. The pilot who was flying the P-61 was very glad to see Pete, as he had no idea of what had happened to him.

(Editor's note: In 1998 Robert contacted **Col. L. W. Lackey**, a P-61 pilot who had gone through cadets with Laborde and was on Ie Shema, at the time. Col. Lackey told the following story about that memorable day.)

The place: Ie Shima, a small island in the Ryukyu chain off the west coast of Okinawa. At one point during WW II it was a highly contested piece of real estate.

Possibly the only reminder that the great war ever passed this way is a lone monument with the plaque inscribed as follows, "AT THIS SPOT THE 77TH INFANTRY DIVISION LOST A BUDDY, ERNIE PYLE, 18 APRIL, 1945."

The time: October, 1945. Everyone is excited. Some about going home. Some about moving to a new, more permanent location. Many units are moving to Japan to become part of the occupation forces.

My unit, the **421st Night Fighter Sqdn.**, equipped with P-61 Black Widows, had started its move to Asiya, on the island of Kyushu, Japan. All the squadron assets and personnel, except the aircraft and flight crews, have been loaded aboard an L.S.T. (Landing Ship, Tank) and anchored on the far side of Okinawa with many other surface vessels.

Aircraft and flight crews had moved in with the 8th Fighter Group (at that time a P-38 outfit) where we would stay until we all flew up to Japan together.

Our detachment commander is a young officer whom we will refer to as Al. In the 8th Fighter Group is a P-38 jockey named Pete. Pete was known to many of us in the 421st from out aviation cadet days, and now Pete and Al become the main characters in this story.

One of our chores while waiting the flight north, was to go to the Army Post Office and pick up the mail for the entire squadron, then load it into one of our P-61's and deliver it to the L.S.T. This was accomplished by flying over to Okinawa, making a low pass over the L.S.T. and then landing getting a grand tour of the local flying area. Then Al decided it was time to deliver the mail.

After identifying the proper ship, Al prepared for his low pass to give the signal that the mail would be delivered to the pickup point. But instead of a simple low pass over the ship as prearranged, Al, no doubt to show off just a bit, made the pass out of a screaming high speed dive with a high-G pullout.

For those occupying the seats, the high-G pullout was not a problem, but for Pete in a standing position, and no handholds but the rear of the R.O. seat, it was quite a different situation.

As the "G" load increased,

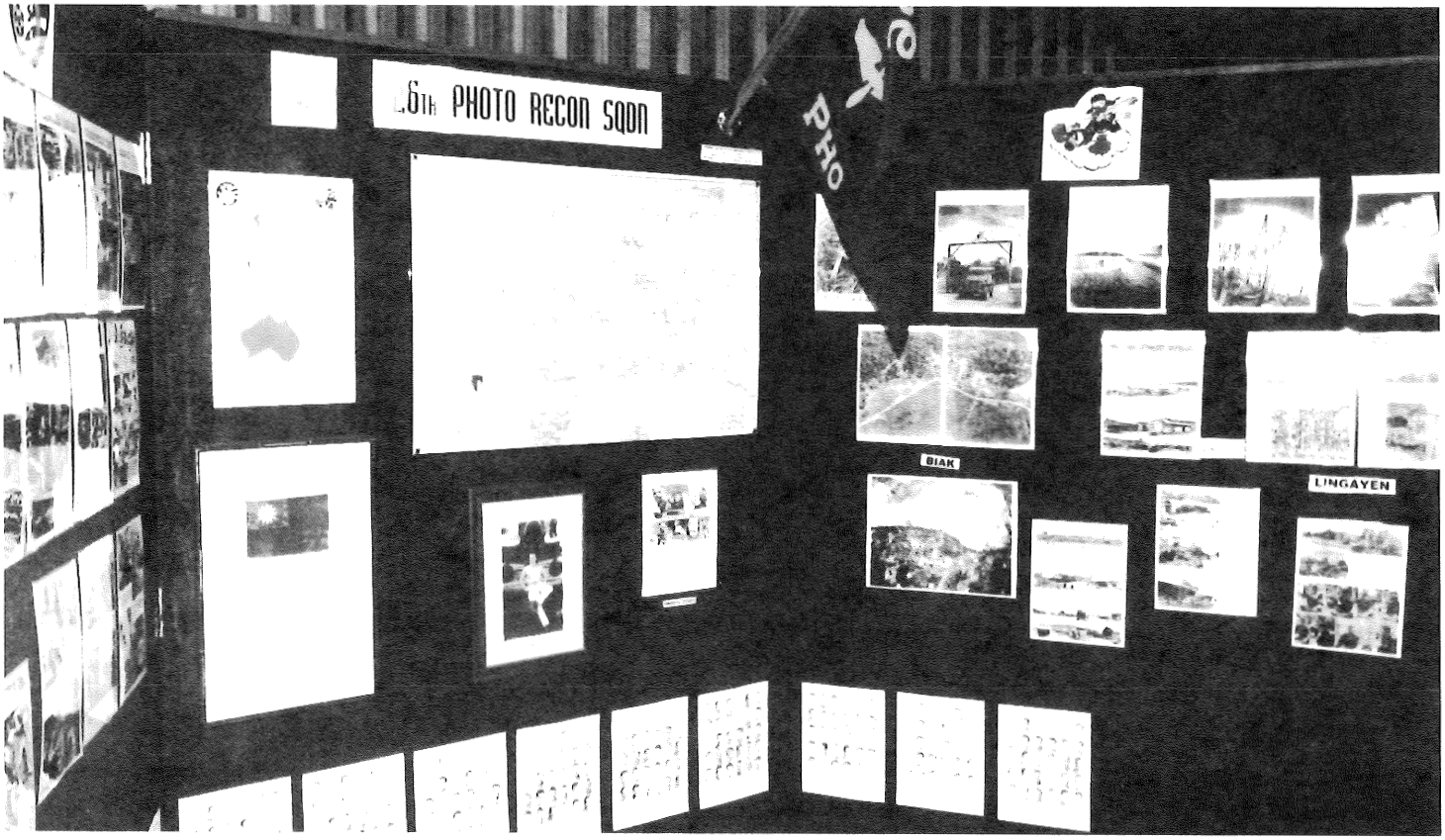
(Continued on page 15.)

Mary Lou Neale in front of the WAFS/WASP exhibit. Very nicely done–a delight to see.

Seen here is the P-38 Lightning Story Wall depicting the P-38 from prototype, through war years to modern day air races. Note the P-38 wingtip at top of photo. A lot of Lockheed history in this display.

Museum Exhibits Museum Exhibits

Displays depicting the 26th and the 7th Phoot Recon groups. Many other displays, all of which cannot be shown on these two pages, are spread throughout the museum.



Ops Bulletin Board . . . . . .

* Flyable

Current Status of P-38/F5 Lightning Aircraft as of January 1999

Source Team:
Dick Willsie, P-38 National Association
Ed Maloney, Planes of Fame Museum, Chino CA
Charles West, Fan of P-38 and Greenland Expedition Society

(1) Model: P-38-1-LO; Serial No.: 41-7630; Reg. No: Unknown; Owner: Roy Shoffner; Location: Middlesboro, KY; Status: "Glacier Girl" of Greenland lost Squadron. Under restoration, specialist crew under Bob Cardin. Proposed completion 1 to 2 years from January 1999.

(2)* P-38J-5-LO; 44-23314; N138BP; Planes of Fame Museum; Chino, CA; Flyable.

(3) P-38J-20-LO; 42-57762; Unknown; Smithsonian; National Air and Space Museum; Static display.

(4) P-38J-5-10; 44-53232; FAH505; Air Force Museum; Dayton, OH; Static display.

(5) P-38I-5-LO; 44-53087; N3800L; E.A.A. Museum; Oskosh, WI; Static Display.

(6) P-38L-5-LO; 44267; N517PA; Weeks Air Museum; Miami, FL; Damaged in storm, only center section and parts left.

(7)* P-38-F5; 27183; N517PA; Yanks Air Museum; Chino, CA; Completely restored to flying condition, will mainly be on static display.

(8) P-38L-LO; 53242; Unknown; Flying Tigers Warbird Museum; Kissimmee, FL; Two crashed P-38 aircraft, Second aircraft is an L model; both P-38 planes are planned to be restored.

(9)* P-38L-5-LO; 44-27053; N345DN; War Eagles Air Museum; Santa Teresa, NM; Flyable but only on static display.

(10)* P-38L-5-LO; 44-53095; N8005R; Lone Star Museum; Galveston, TX; "Putt-Putt Maru"; Flyable but will undergo restoration during 1999.

(11)* P-38L-5-LO; 44-26996; N5596V; Santa Monica Museum of Flight; Flyable but will undergo restoration during 1999 at the museum restoration site in Mojave, CA.

(12)* P-38F/L; 44-53254; N25Y; Lefty Gardner; Burnet, TX; Flyable "White Lightnin" - For Sale.

(13) P-38E-plus; 42-10488; N38LL; Confederate Air Force, Central Texas Wing; San Marcos, TX; "Scatterbrain Kid". Crashed 1994. Now under construction.

(14) P-38L-5-LO; 44-5336; Unknown; Bong Memorial, Polar Museum, Ahoka Airport; Blaine, MN.; Static display.

(15) P-38L-5-LO; 44-53097; N3JB; Champlain Air Museum; Mesa, AZ.; Static display only. Originaly this plane was a P-38M Night Fighter.

(16)* P-38L-5-LO; 44-53186; NL2114L; Del Smith Evergreen; McMinnville, OR; Restoration of this P-38 was completed to a flyable status by Daryl Skurich in Colorado.

(17)* P-38L-5-LO; 44-27231; N79123; David Tallichet; Hangared in the P-38 National Association Hangar at the March Field Air Museum; Riverside, CA; Completed its annual inspection January, 1999.

(18)* P-38L-5-LO; 44-27083; N502MH; Bruce Pruett; Tillamook Naval Air Station Museum; Tillamook, OR;

Glacier Girl, under restoration. (The Lost Squadron P-38 Restoration Program, Middlesboro, Ky.)

(19) P-38-5-LO; 44-26969; Unknown; Crashed June 6, 1997. Not restoreable.

(20) P-38L-5-LO; 44-53015; N9957F; McGuire Air Force Base; New Jersey; Static display.

(21) P-38J-10; 42-67638; Unknown; Air Force Museum of Flight; Hill Air Force Base; Recovered from the Aleutian Islands August 1994. Restored for Static Display.

Comments: There may be other P-38's outside of the United States, but none are known to be flyable.

*(**Ilfrey, Barber Inducted** continued from page 6.)*

enemy territory back to England.

Col. Rex Barber took part in the longest intercept mission flown during World War II which had the objective of locating **Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's** flight. It was encountered near Bougainville Island and an intense engagement followed. No recognition of its success could be made at the time because of the necessity of keeping secret the breaking of the Japanese code.

Only recently has Barber been rightfully credited with shooting down the Betty bomber that carried Japan's most powerful Naval leader and the architect of the raid on Pearl Harbor.

Other honored inductees were **Col. Walker "Bud" Mahurin, USAF (Ret.), Col. Robert Morgan, USAFR (Ret.)**, the crew of **Grumman TBF Avenger Bureau No. 00380, Torpedo Squadron Eight, USN, the American Volunteer Group (AVG) "Flying Tigers", Maj. Gen. John R. Alison USAF (Ret.), and Brig. Gen. Robert E. Galer, USMC (Ret.).**

O'Sullivan Honored

Charles P. "Sully" O'Sullivan was inducted into the Arkansas Aviation Hall of Fame during ceremonies conducted November 5, 1998 at the Aerospace Education Center.

O'Sullivan was introduced by his son, **USAF Col. Peter K. Sullivan** and "Peter did a fine job" according to Sully.

Born in Eureka, Illinois, O'Sullivan enlisted in the USAAF before the attack on Pearl harbor, was commissioned a second lieutenant

(Continued on page 16.)

Lost

Lost (or needed) . . .

I am attempting to gather information for a painting, and would like to make contact with anyone associated with the F-5 Lightning flown by the following units assigned to the **USAAF 12th AF: 3rd Photo Recon Group**, consisting of the **5thPRS, 12thPRS** and the **23rdPRS**. Please contact me at the following address.

Bill Burton
Fox-Two! Aviation
350A-304 Prospect Boulevard
Frederick, MD 21701
301-682-4646

Photos Wanted

I am currently working on the definitive history of Bovingdon Airfield in Hertfordshire England, situated some four miles from where I live.

My reason for writing is a Technical Engineering Section headed by **Col Ben Kelsey**, and **Major Cass Hough**, carried out various assignment loads during their time at Bovingdon. One such testing was the P-38 Droop Snoot Lightning (Pathfinder). So far no photograps to my knowledge have been found showing P-38s at Bovington.

I am interested, therefore, in all photographs - negatives, if any - you may have on file in respect of this base. If so, I would like to purchase copies for use. Providing this is possible, could you please let me know. A brief description of each frame would be appreciated.

M.P. Humphrey
'Little Hivings'
239, Great Hivings
Chesham, Bucks. HP5 2LP
ENGLAND

Found

. . . and Found: A Victory for Jack Walker

by Mary Lou Neale

On an overcast day over the marshalling yards near Sofia, Bulgaria on November 27, 1944 **Captain Jack Walker** shot down an enemy plane for his fifth victory. The B-24s his **82ndFG** were escorting had completed their bomb drop when an ME-109 was spotted. Two P-38s went after it and Walker's firing resulted in a kill.

"The canopy came off and hunks of the plane flew in all directions," both pilots reported. The claim was recognized at the time but the documentation was later lost.

It was not until after years of perseverance, supported by interested parties and the incredible luck of finding the other pilot, that the facts were documented and Walker was installed into the hierarchy of Combat Aces in 1998.

"I am totally surprised that the Victory Confirmation Board would do this fifty-plus years later," Walker said at the ceremony in October 1998 arranged by the Confederate Air Force Group One in San Diego. Walker was sworn in by **Steve Pisanos**, Chairman of the Confirmation Board.

It was indeed unusual but the Board has become known for its recent thorough investigations and the facts were substantiated in Walker's case.

Walker scored his first victory during a sea sweep over the Mediterranean on his fifth mission while flying wingman for a **Captain Peterson**. They were startled to see several three-engine Cant-Z float planes below them.

"It seemed suicidal of the Italians to have several of these big, lumbering float planes there when so many of our aircraft were overhead," Walker recalled. Peterson said "Hey! Hey!" and banked to the right with Walker right behind him. Walker's firepower quickly got one of the Cant-Zs. "He (Peterson) shot behind and I shot in front. I got her and she just crumpled," Walker said.

Walker's second victory also came on a Med Sea sweep but it had a different scenario. The P-38s were escorting B-25s going after Rommell's supply ships when a swarm of 40 JU-52s appeared at 10 o'clock. The 1stFG swung left and the 82nd peeled off to the right and fierce and long aerial conflict raged.

As Walker hit his JU-52 it exploded into a fireball because it was carrying tank fuel. An engagement with a Stuka followed but Walker claimed only a "damaged."

"It was a fighter's game. A terrific sight with many JU-52s burning on the water. Nearly everyone had a claim," Walker said.

But the foray had consumed so much fuel that Walker and several of his fellow pilots were barely able to reach the nearest British Air/Sea Rescue base en route home. Walker, low on fuel, was forced to circle while five Lightnings ahead of him landed. Then one bellied in with a huge display of sparks and smoke. "There goes the runway!" Walker thought. But the plane was cleared from the runway and he landed.

Walker's third and fourth victories came when he was based at Foggia. Following a bombing raid the group was escorting a single engine P-38 home when a lone FW-190 dove through them. Walker chased it, firing as he closed in. Suddenly, the enemy pilot bailed out. Surprised, Walker called to his fellow pilots, "Did you see that?" They had, but could not follow the pilotless plane because they had to continue protecting the one-engine Lightning.

The fourth kill came when Walker, escorting a B-17 near Klangenfort, Austria, shot down an

(Continued on page 15.)

Books in Review

The Lightning and WWII in print

Happy Jack's Go Buggy Reviewed

By Mary Lou Neale

This 1998 revised, enlarged edition of **Jack Ilfrey's** 1979 published account of his adventures and misadventures in the **20thFG, 8th Air Force** contains photographs never before published, detailed profile paintings of the three planes involved and a 1993 epilogue. It is, as author Len Deighton says "a true aviation classic... the perfect mix of wartime life on the ground and a vivid account of combat". The unusual experiences of this normal young Texan, who was in the first group to fly fighters across the North Atlantic and became one of the first aces in WWII, include his unsanctioned flying escape from Portugal internment, hazardous walking escape through enemy territory in France and a crippling contact encounter in combat.

Ilfrey's mild demeanor inspired Ernie Pyle to write in "Here is Your War": "It was hard to conceive of his ever having killed anybody. Yet he mowed 'em down... He got two FW 190s one day, two ME 109s another and his fifth was a ME 110. He hadn't had smooth sailing by any means. In fact, he was very lucky to be alive at all. He got caught in a trap one day and came home with 268 holes in his plane."

The "mild demeanor" did not rule out some typical fighter jock hi-jinks. Captain Ilfrey figured that his promotions after being busted for infractions could add up to making the rank of General. But he finished the was, having flown 142 combat missions with eight aerial victories, and received the Air Medal with 12 Oak Leaf clusters, DFC with Silver Star and Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and European and African ribbons with 6 Bronze Stars.

The following testimonials are of interest:

Lt. Gen. Doolittle: "I found Jack Ilfrey's story... readable, interesting and provocative."

Lt. Gen Ira Eaker: "... a gallant ace of the Mighty Eighth. One of those courageous little brothers who made victory possible..."

Gen. William Simpson: "You move swiftly from episode to episode and feel as though you are his co-pilot on a most absorbing odyssey."

Barry Goldwater: "You've done a fine job. It certainly takes a person back a day or two."

Jim Howard (Congressional Medal of Honor winner and ace with 13 1/2 victories): "...an amazing account and well written..."

Roger Freeman (British author): "... a joy to read, partly because he does not take himself seriously. Adventures... related in a laid-back manner as if there was nothing extraordinary about them. But many of the happenings are far from ordinary."

The 8 1/2" X 11" book can be ordered from:

Schiffer Publishing Ltd.
4880 Lower Valley Rd.
Atglen PA 19310 ($35.00)

or autographed from:

Jack Ilfrey
1409 Nacogdoches
San Antonio TX 78209-2751

The 55th Fighter Group VS. The Luftwaffe

By John M. Gray

One hundred and thirty two pages of pure adrenalin describing the fighter action in the skies over Europe, John Gray's story is interspersed with interviews with the pilots on each side of every battle describing their views on the strengths and weaknesses of their planes and the tactics they developed to try to win and to stay alive.

Dozens of excellent photographs will bring back memories to those who were there and create a sense of being there for those who were not.

Starting in October, 1943, the 55th destroyed over 600 enemy aircraft. Flying P-38's they were the first squadrons to have the range to accompany our bombers more than 700 miles deep into Europe. They were deadly in attacking dangerous targets of opportunity on the ground, while being shot at by everything from pistols to high powered anti-aircraft guns.

A complete glossary of the Commanders, the Aces, and the Group's Casualties describing when, how, and where they were lost is included.

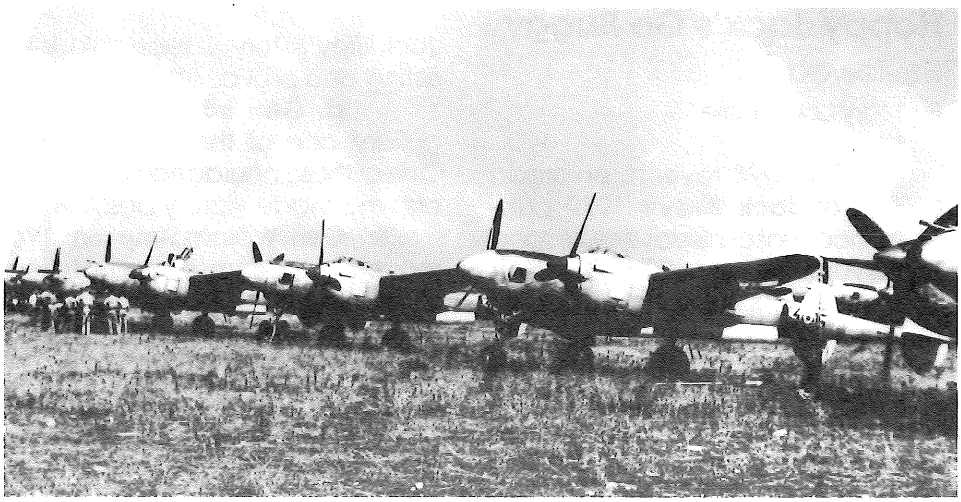
Published in 1998 by Specialty Press Publishers, 11381 Kost Dam Rd., North Branch, MN. 55056. 1-800-895-4585 $34.95

Historian's Corner

*(**Italian Lightning** continued from page 5.)*

school at Lecce from 1948 until the end of 1953. Several were modified by I.M.M. as dual-control trainers; besides being used at Lecce, at least one of these was assigned to the 3rd Wing and another to the Air Force's Experimental Flight Test Center.

As the inventory of Lightnings continued to decrease, the type's days with the Italian Air Force became numbered. By late 1954 the 28th Group had only a little over a dozen left. The 3rd Fighter Wind transferred to Verona-Villafranca at that time, and the few remaining P-38s were reassigned to the training center at Bari-Palese. The last 14 were dismantled in July, 1956. Much to the chagrin of Italian aviation historians, not one survived. Thus this important aircraft is not represented in any of the country's aviation museums.



The first P-38 on the right (3-15) is Italian Serial MM 4215 P-38 F5E-4 LO. From April 1952 to March 1953 it was flight tested at the Experimental Test Flight Center at Rome-Guidonia. (Photo coutesy of Carlo Lucchini.)

The author's sincere thanks to Swiss aviation historian **Carlo Lucchini**, upon whose published monograph (in Italian) this article is based, and to Italian historian **Giuseppe Versolato**, for his translation of some of that material and for providing additional information on this subject.

They Don't Always Drop . . .

By Wallace Anderson

The article in the October ***Lightning Strikes*** by **Reyburn F. Crocker** (where he thought he ha dropped his bombs, but fought the dog fight with bombs still attached) reminded me of a time just before the Battle of the Bulge.

We were returning to base and still had our bombs - I think they were 1,000 pounds each - when the flight leader decided we would dive bomb a target in Trier. What we didn't know was that Trier was a staging area for the Battle of the Bulge and was heavily fortified.

The flack and small arms fire was so heavy I could hardly see the P-38 ahead of me. I did see that plane get hit and fly into the ground.

When I tried to drop my bombs, they wouldn't release and I had to carry them back up to altitude through all of the fire.

Back at the base I was told that if I tried to land with the bombs they would probably fall off and explode. I made a smooth landing at 150 mph, used all of the runway and then some. Needless to say, the bombs didn't come off!

The next day I was told that they couldn't find anything wrong with the bomb release. Maybe this is the plane Crocker was flying on February 25 when we - seven P-38s - had our dog fight with more than 50 ME-109s.

Wallace R. Anderson
3218 W. Cherokee Ave.
Enid, Oklahoma 73703-5055

If you find mistakes in this publication, please consider they are there for a purpose. We publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes!!!!

Folded Wings

Hjalmar Johnson (401FS, 370FG) of Massepequal Park, NY, died March 5, 1999.

Dave Schwatz (484FS, 370FG) of Walnut, CA, died Aug. 20, 1998. He was a graduate of West Point and a recipient of the Purple Heart.

Earnie Cloyd (37FS,14FG) died April 18, 1998.

Jim Hagenback (94FS, 82FG) died Oct., 1998.

Reyburn Crocker (401FS, 370FG) of Selma, CA, died Nov. 12, 1998.

Katherine S. (Loft) Strehle, WASP WWII, a Life Member of the P-38 National Association, died Mar. 10, 1999.

*(**Walker** continued from page 12.)*

ME-109. Walker had some thoughts about this one: "The ME-109 was below us, which probably meant that the pilot was not a German. They (German pilots) seemed to always attack from above."

Walker turned in his final victory claim at the time and did not think much about it because, he said, "I was eager to go home after so many months overseas." The local papers - Los Angeles Times and Pasadena newspapers - had "played it up big at the time," Walker said, but later there was a denial as the records from the base at Bari had been misplaced.

"I dropped the whole thing. It wasn't until 1960 that I asked the German Air Force to check its records and they confirmed they had lost two aircraft on that day but had no records of whom shot them down," Walker commented. "A year ago I contacted Steve Pisanos about the procedure for confirmation. He said that one possibility was left: the word of the pilot flying behind him and they found **Al Schneider** living in Phoenix."

Schneider remembered the day well, Walker said. "He had a great memory and wrote a letter of verification. The feeling of receiving the Ace now is almost better, for it is stronger. But I can't call and tell my old squadron members, because they're gone."

Jack Walker received the Distinguished Flying Cross during his combat tour.

*(**P-38 Fallout** continued from page 7.)*

Pete found it harder and harder to stand in an upright position and when his hands slipped from their hold on the back of the seat, he with great force, sat down on the entrance hatch.

The latch holding it closed was not built to sustain that much force, so it failed. The hatch came open, and according to Pete, "The airplane was simply gone."

Meanwhile back at the L.S.T., the Black Widow was sighted and the shout went up, "Time for the mail." Then someone remarked, "Look at that _____ fool Al! He's tossing the mail out right here." Then the so-called mail bag sprouted arms and legs, then a parachute, and before the chute could make one swing, Pete was in the water.

The Navy being near at hand, and as always, alert and efficient, had a launch on the scene in a matter of minutes. Hardly before he could comprehend what had happened, Pete was safely aboard the launch and except for a few upchucks due to swallowing sea water, Pete was little worse for the experience.

After Pete's rapid departure from the P-61, the nurse in the rear seat did not know how to operate the interphone system, so Al up in the pilot's seat knew nothing was amiss until he landed back at home base. Then they had a few anxious hours until Pete was able to communicate that he was OK.

I don't know if this story has a moral, or if much of anything was learned from it. I did hear rumors, however, that Pete never again even got close to a P-61. In fact he didn't even like to see pictures of them.

Odds Ends

(O'Sullivan continued from page 11.)

and received his pilot wings in September 1941. He shipped out to the Southwest Pacific in January 1942 and was assigned to the **39th Fighter Squadron, 35th Group, 5th Air Force.**

He served combat tours in the P-39 Aracobra and P-38 in the New Guinea area in 1942-1943, flying 178 combat missions with 400 combat hours. O'Sullivan was credited with shooting down five enemy aircraft. The 39th was the first all-P-38 squadron in the SWPA and the first to shoot down 100 enemy planes.

On 20 September 1943, while on a Wewak raid, O'Sullivan's plane was shot up by a Japanese fighter. He eluded the fighter and crash landed in the jungle where he survived a thirty-day trek during which he encountered native headhunters. After a dramatic evening around a campfire, he had a shoot-out with the natives and escaped, embarking on a three week walk out of the New Guinea jungle.

Almost fifty years to the date in September 1993, the wreckage of O'Sullivan's P-38 was discovered.

O'Sullivan later commanded a **Fighter Replacement Unit**, was one of the first military jet pilots in the United States; became

an Air Instructor for the Illinois Air National Guard; Chief of Plans , **1009th Special Weapons Squadron**, Washington, D.C.; Air War College; Air Attache, Lisbon, Portugal; and was the first Wing Commander, **308th Strategic Missile Wing (Titan II)**, Arkansas. He retired as Colonel in 1968 after almost 28 years of military service.

He attended Eureka College and graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, in 1950 and from the Air War College at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, in 1955.

O'Sullivan served as vice president of a leading Arkansas bank for almost 12 years.

He received the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and Purple Heart.

475thFG 21st Reunion 1999

The **475thFG 21st Reunion** will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the Best Western Midway Hotel-Milwaukee Airport on Thursday-Friday-Saturday and Sunday, September 9-12, 1999.

A tour of the EAA Museum at Oshkosh, WI will take place Friday, Sept. 10 and a Discover Milwaukee tour will take place Saturday, Sept. 11. The Saturday evening cocktail party and banquet will feature Big Band music by "Georgy Boy", the comedy act "Highhatters", and the comedy quartet "Merry Mugs."

Contact Chairpersons **Dave and Dolly Berby, (432nd.FS)**, 7839 Douglas Ave., Racine, WI 53402. Phone (414) 639-4769.

Lightning Strikes
is published three times per year--Feb., June and Oct.--by the **P-38 National Association** solely for its members. Contributions--articles, letters-to-the-editor, journals, photographs, etc.--are accepted with great thanks. Photographs are treated with care and every effort is made to return them. We reserve the right to edit all contributions. Reproductions of any portion of **Lightning Strikes** is by written permission only.

USA annual dues--$25, Canada, Mexico--$30, other foreign dues--$35; Life membership--(born prior to 1925) $200, (1925 to 1934) $300, (1935+) $400; outside USA life membership not available.

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SANTA ANA, CA.
PERMIT NO. 1720